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SUBJECT: WOMEN OF LES FORCES VIVES FORM COALITION

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Worried about what they see as an increasing potential for violence, the women of Les Forces Vives appear to be forming their own coalition in order to better focus their efforts to effect change. The women discussed a detailed plan of action, but clearly lacked financial resources. Still, the coalition represents an interesting development. Guinea's women have largely operated in the background over the last few years, but this group may be wanting to move to center stage. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Female members of some of Guinea's major opposition political parties appear to be coalescing as a separate bloc within Les Forces Vives. A group of six of these women met with A/DCM on September 16 to discuss their concerns and explain their reasons for establishing the coalition. The women represented the following political parties: UFDG (Cellou Diallo), UFR (Sidya Toure, RPG (Alpha Conde), UFD, and PEDN.

3. (SBU) Going around the room, all of the women expressed deep concerns about the current socio-political situation in Guinea. Several commented that the country is on the brink of a "total breakdown" while others specifically mentioned what they saw as an increasingly likelihood of violent conflict. They noted that various women's groups have been publicly demonstrating their support for CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara, but that these women are little more than paid supporters. "They have no base, they do not represent the general female population," one woman said. In addition, they expressed concern that their respective political leaders were too focused on individual interests rather than the collective good.

4. (SBU) In light of this situation, the women said they felt it necessary to develop an action plan. "We need to work together as women and make sure that our political leaders are hearing what we have to say," one said. Detailing their action plan, they explained that they had already issued a declaration, which they planned to follow with targeted efforts to inform their political leaders of their concerns, use of private media to express their views, and distribution of promotional materials. They also indicated that they were considering non-violent means of protest including sit-ins and marches. However, they also noted their lack of financial resources, and requested USG assistance.

5. (SBU) One of the women commented that this initiative represents the first time women political leaders have mobilized as a group since 2006. "We are absolutely willing to go all the way and we need the CNDD to understand that," she said.

6. (SBU) A question from A/DCM about how security forces might react to women demonstrators sparked a heated debate among the women. Most of the women seemed convinced that the military would not hesitate to shoot at them while a few were

equally convinced that the military would not hurt its mothers and sisters. One women scoffed, saying "you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs." Another added that security forces did not hesitate to fire on women in Mali during a similar kind of women-led protest.

COMMENT

17. (SBU) The women's initiative is an interesting development, especially since women generally seem to take a back seat in Guinean politics - until there is a need for them to mobilize. When this has been the case in the past, they have proven to be a powerful force. END COMMENT.
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